

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/29/2023 12:44:03 PM

First name: Howard

Last name: Morkert

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I've snowmobiled and snobiked the backcountry of the KNF for 25 years and the many things I haven't seen are important to counter the proposed closures.

1. The old adage for recreation in the forest is "leave no trace", over snow vehicles are the poster child for that, when the snow melts and the tracks disappear you cannot see where they have been and the community as a whole is better than most at "pack it in pack it out".
2. Another thing I haven't seen in the high country in the spring is any evidence of bears emerging from a den or bear tracks in the backcountry snowfields. In late spring the snow down low leaves and makes access difficult if not impossible. Any bears that do emerge head for open ground where grass and other food is available. Grizzly bear denning area closures on March 31st seem to be closures for closures sake not based on any study or science. All of those small areas marked for early closure are ridiculously impossible to manage , enforce or comply with.
3. Something else I have never seen in the high snowfields is the tracks of cross country skis or snoshoes. Those that say OSVs ruin the solitude of those that choose to use that mode of transport don't realize the effort required to access these areas on foot. Often it requires 10 to twenty miles of roads to get there and it is the rare person that can expend that amount of energy to access these areas.

Finally the effort to close so many areas is counter to the KNF operating plan that is still valid and that citizens groups worked so many years to craft. Let's leave it in place and use it to guide where OSVs can operate, it has worked well till now.

Closures are like an ever tightening noose that never loosens, they should reflect the will of the forest users and not be taken lightly.